

The HHSA Connection

DECEMBER 2004

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Working Together for the Kids *South Region Kicks Off a New Foster Family Recruitment Campaign*

South Region Childrens Services introduced a new foster family recruitment campaign at the December 14th meeting of the Chula Vista Community Collaborative (CVCC). The CVCC brings together multiple sectors of the community (e.g., schools, government, community-based organizations, and residents) to share information and resources, and coordinate efforts to improve the health and well-being of Chula Vista residents.

At the kick-off event, South Region Childrens Services staff gave a presentation to CVCC partners about new strategies the Agency is employing to prevent the need for children to enter the foster-care system, increase the recruitment and retention of foster-families, and minimize disruptions in the lives of children who are placed in foster-care.

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map was used to show the locations (zip-code origin) of foster-care cases that occurred in the region during the past year. The map revealed which South Region communities are most in need of foster families. CVCC participants were informed about the importance of keeping foster children in their home communities, so schooling and extra-curricular activities are not disrupted, and children can maintain supportive relationships with friends, teachers, their faith community, and others. Experienced foster families in all county regions have been recruited to serve as "way stations," i.e. short-term foster homes until children can be reunited with their biological families or placed in long-term foster homes in their own communities. Children are transported to their own schools while they stay in way-station families, regardless of where the family resides. The use of way-station families reduces the need to place foster children in institutions like Polinsky and increases the likelihood that children will be kept in their home communities.

CVCC partners, especially schools, were encouraged to become more active in efforts to recruit and retain foster families. For example, schools can partner

Working for Kids and Communities!



The foster family recruitment campaign kick-off event at the Chula Vista Community Collaborative included an exhibit of expressive art created by foster children residing at Polinsky Children's Center.

with HHSA to host foster-family recruitment events. School workers can volunteer their support to local foster children and their families. These new strategies are already helping to decrease the number of South Region children who must be placed in foster homes outside of their communities.

A Message from Jean Shepard *Agency Director*

This time of year tends to bring a flood of memories to mind. It's a natural time to get in touch with family and friends, to reach out with warm wishes. It's also a good time to reflect on the year gone by.

This year has been especially rewarding for me. For one thing, I had the honor of being appointed Director of the HHSA. It was a position I accepted with enthusiasm, given my long tenure with the County, and my dedication to the Agency and its programs. I have been continually fortunate to work with talented and committed staff, who do great things for the people of San Diego County.

Along with the celebrations of the season, I would like to acknowledge the results of our efforts, and look forward to the coming year with equal pleasure. I wish each one of you joy and peace.



Jean Shepard

A Healthy Partnership

Student Nurses Experience Public Health

Every year the Public Health Nurses (PHNs) at the North Central Region Public Health Center have taken an active role in mentoring student nurses from San Diego State University and Point Loma Nazarene University. The relationship has created an excellent opportunity for the students to go beyond the walls of the hospital into the "real world" of public health to observe what PHNs do to promote healthy lifestyles. The students learn how to teach and encourage mothers about infant and child health, promote immunizations, well baby care, and growth and development. Other experiences for the students may include time with the PHNs working in the TB control program, the foster care system, and the bioterrorism program. The students are also exposed to other programs offered at the Public Health Center, such as well baby care and immunization clinics.



The relationship not only benefits the students, but also helps the patients. The clients benefit from the students' visits and teaching. The students attend community collaborative meetings in the region and learn about the role of HHSA and the PHNs in the overall health of San Diego County residents.

Many of the PHNs see their mentoring role as a way of introducing the students to new professions in the field of public health.

As a result of this program some of the students have applied to become PHNs. Mentoring students keeps the nurses "on their toes," because they model a standard of practice and answer many questions during the course of the day. In addition, the PHNs and students learn from each other. It's a partnership that equally benefits the community, the students and the nurses.

Public Health Services

Working for Kids!



A Registry by any Other Name ...

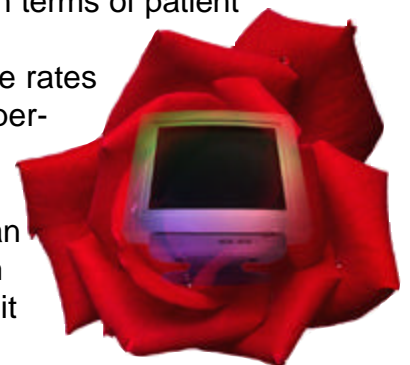
Rosey Technology Still Keeps Immunization Records Organized

You may have heard the famous quote from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a "rose by any other name would smell as sweet." HHSA's Immunization Registry, formerly called *All Kids Count* (AKC), now has a new name: the *San Diego Regional Immunization Registry*, or SDiR for short.

Besides the new name, this rose has developed a new branch - sharing information with the Imperial County Public Health Department. SDiR is also now web-based, or "live" on the Internet. To view the actual login page, go to: <http://www.sandiegoimmunizationregistry.org/index.htm>.

San Diego's immunization registry was started in 1997 with an "All Kids Count" grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Since that time, all public health centers, the CalWORKs and Medi-Cal programs and almost all community clinics in San Diego County have joined. SDiR is one of nine regional immunization registries in California and the folks involved are proud to say it is the largest in terms of patient records - more than 800,000 to date.

Immunization registries help providers increase their immunization coverage rates by merging all of a patient's shot records from all sources and forecasting a person's needed vaccines up to the age of 110! These electronic systems also help parents, schools and childcare providers by printing out a copy of the California Immunization Record for school and daycare. HHSA employees can encourage their own health care providers to join the registry by having them call the SDiR Provider Services Manager at (619) 692-8492 to find out what it takes to participate.



During this special season, Agency employees have been spreading goodwill, on the job, and off! Here are just a few examples.

The *San Diego County Latino Association* holds an annual Christmas party to collect toys and then distributes them at Washington Elementary and the Monarch High School, which is dedicated to providing homeless and at-risk children with an accredited education while caring for their basic needs. This year's event will be held on December 11 at the Mission Valley Hilton.

The 22-year old Association also runs a mentorship program with students from grades 4 - 6, and visits classrooms to promote Hispanics in local government. For more information, call: Vice President **Elainerose Lontoc**, Office Support Specialist, Health Services, (619) 409-3599; or **Sylvia Bugiel**, Supervising Clerk, Parks and Recreation, (619) 498-2237.

Ocean Beach volunteers get together each year for a three-month long effort to raise funds to spread the holiday spirit into the community. Using creative partnerships with local merchants, civic organizations, and a few local government donations, the *Ocean Beach Tree Festival Committee* organizes a string of nine events. This is the 25th year. Three years ago the Committee adopted 80 families and a battered women's shelter. Two years ago the number rose to 100, and last year they even reached outside the local community and adopted 10 families from the Harbison Canyon fire area.

Slated events include: Santa and Elf Ashley visit, December 11 and 18; Santa Claws Dog Beach event, December 12; Family Food and Toy Drive, December, 14 - 17; and Holiday Homes Contest and Christmas Caroling, December 15.

For more information or to contribute to the food and toy drive, contact **George Gonzales** (619) 692-8071, Facilities Management Admin Analyst III.

Dehl **Lorenzo**, Social Worker, has been contacting our community partners in East Region and has obtained generous donations for our families in our *Neighborhoods for Kids* clusters. The East Region will have a Parents Holiday Shopping Spree in the office at 151 Van Houten Ave., El Cajon on

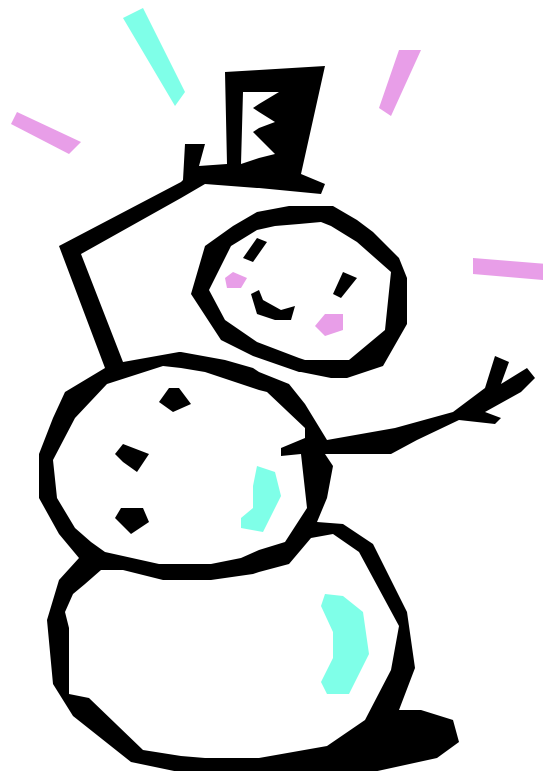
December 17 and 20 where 65 families will choose and wrap Christmas presents for their children with the help of staff.

On December 11, Centre City is distributing toys from the Toys for Tots drive to approximately 1,000 Central Region children. **Reba Baldwin** Centre City FRC District Manager, is the contact, at (619) 338-2016.

South Region FRC is also participating in the Toys for Tots drive. They are currently going to receive toys for 268 children ages 0-14. **Josie Frelke**, Health Services HHS Admin III, is the contact, at (619) 409-3248.

The Mills Childrens Office set up a toy store with donations received through Polinsky, staff donations, and a large donation of school supplies from Wal-Mart. They made it available to relatives with children in placement as well as our Family Maintenance cases. The adult can come in and choose from a variety of items, use provided wrapping paper and leave with a wrapped gift. For more information, contact **Lucia Colmenero** (619) 338-2220.

Thanks to all those who sent in news about the generous donations of time and gifts given to the people of San Diego.



HHSA Overview - ORD

Working for Operational Excellence and Communities!

Each month, the *HHSA Connection* will feature the services of the Agency's different divisions, to provide a broad overview of the Agency. This month, the series continues with the Office of Resource Development.

The Office of Resource Development (ORD), headed by Deputy Director Georgia Tate, was formed in 2001 with the goal of increasing funding for building, improving, and sustaining health and human services within San Diego County. ORD researches funding opportunities and forwards that information daily to representatives from faith-based and community-based organizations, and County departments. In fiscal year 2003-04, ORD played a role in securing more than \$9 million dollars in grant funds.

Other services provided by ORD include technical assistance, consultation on funding strategies, identifying new sources of government and foundation funding and assisting in the preparation and/or review of applications. In addition, ORD administers funds to procure the services of grant writers for HHSA regions and divisions.

In May 2003, ORD joined with the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) to expand the County's ability to research, and apply for, grant funding. Staff from LUEG played a key role in securing over \$40 million in grants funds for fire mitigation efforts following the October 2003 firestorms.

For more information about ORD, or to be included in the database to receive funding notices, please contact Denis McGee at (619) 685-2291 or e-mail at denis.mcgee@sdcounty.ca.gov.

HHSA Shining Stars

Working for Operational Excellence!

Employee Kudos

Earlier this year, the planning tools used by Public Health's Tobacco Control Resource

Remember to send in kudos! Please send text (and photo) to: your section editor, or Jennifer.Mallory@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Program (also known as the County Local Lead Agency) were recognized by the California Department of Health Services-Tobacco Control Section on its Web site. Besides providing this information to other agencies in the state, the Web site said "The San Diego County Local Lead Agency (LLA) has created Communities of Excellence (CX) Planning Tools to help other LLAs with the CX planning and their 2004-2007 Comprehensive Plan development. The sample tools include a snapshot of indicators and assets, a CX process graphic..." and more. All 61 county and city health departments receiving Proposition 99 funding are required to complete the CX assessment process.

Congratulations to **Whitney Pinto**, Public Health Nurse (PHN) Case Manager at North Central Public Health Center for completing the Frontline Leadership Program. She successfully completed a final project on Public Health Nurse productivity. As a result of the project, Public Health Nursing Administration will explore evaluation methods for PHN activities. Whitney's career goal is to work in a nurse manager position.



Whitney Pinto, PHN

Have Some News?

Please submit article ideas to your section editor listed below, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail.



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